

2008 January 23

Sally Thigpen
The City of Raleigh, Parks & Recreation Department
222 W. Hargett Street, Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Sally,

I teach Natural Resources Measurements at NC State University. This spring, we are developing an assessment of the ecological value of Raleigh's urban forest using the Urban Forest Effects (UFORE) model. UFORE combines data collected in the field with meteorological data to produce a report of the:

- structure of an urban forest, including number of trees, species composition, and percent tree cover
- dollar value of ecosystem services provided by the forest, including pollution removal, carbon storage and sequestration, building energy savings

I am seeking cooperation for this effort from the City of Raleigh's Parks & Recreation Division and the NC Division of Forest Resources, Urban Forestry Program. Specifically, I seek:

- Help defining the scope of the project so that it has maximum utility.
- Some technical help collecting data, mostly related to helping students identify trees under leaf-off conditions. I envision a training session for this, and perhaps some help in the field during data collection during February and early March.
- Permission to collect data in Raleigh City Parks, if any of our randomly-selected sample plots are located there. Data collection will be non-invasive and non-destructive (species identification, bole diameter, height, crown diameter, etc).
- Permission to tell property owners of plots on private land that we are working in collaboration with Raleigh Parks.

I view our work this semester as a pilot effort that will result, ultimately, in a quantitative assessment of the ecological value of Raleigh's urban forest. I believe the resulting report will be of value to planners and decision-makers, because it will highlight the under-recognized value (in dollars) of the environmental services provided by our urban forest. You have already seen the reports generated for other cities, and I know you recognize their value. This is an opportunity to put Raleigh at the forefront, especially in the Southeastern United States where only Atlanta has been assessed in this manner.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely yours,

George Hess, Associate Professor

Approved by Barry Goldfarb, Department Head